

air, six and a half enemy aircraft on the ground, with the probable destruction of one enemy aircraft in the air and with damaging three in the air and three on the ground: all in the space of two months. He was promoted Captain and made Deputy Squadron Commander. In July, he participated in the first shuttle bombing of Germany, from England to Russia to Italy to England—with a mission from Italy over Roumania, where he shot down two German planes.

Jones' nickname in his squadron was Biff. His last mission, August 8, 1944, was described afterwards in a letter by one of his wing men:

"I was . . . on the show and saw most of what happened. Biff had only about 3 hrs. left in his tour and didn't have to fly that Norway show (it was briefed for 7 plus hrs.). But, being the swell guy that he was, he wouldn't send his flight on a rough show without him. . . . The show was to take the R.A.F. on a shipping raid and the 4th to go on inland to strafe airfields. '35' caught the G.A.F. Headquarters field at Stavanger. The Jerrys had evidently been warned, because the flak was very heavy and accurate. There was only one plane, a 210, on the field; Biff got it.

"When we started back and were 100-150 miles out from the coast of Norway, Biff's kite started smoking. I tried to get him on the radio, but he didn't answer. He jettisoned his canopy and waved at us just before his plane fell off on a wing and went in. We circled the spot and tried to contact Air-Sea as long as gas held out. His unopened chute came to the surface after two minutes. We stayed . . . for about ten minutes but nothing else came up. The R.A.F. had some Wellingtons out in the area later, but nothing more was reported."



JOHN LEBOUTILLIER

1939

On the SPS hockey team of 1939 there played five men later killed in the Second World War: one, Roy Manny, in the crash of a plane during training; the four others in action: Charlie von Stade in Germany, Quentin Meyer on Okinawa, Frank Jones shot down off the coast of Norway, John LeBoutillier, the team's captain, during an attack on Rota Island in the Marianas.

LeBoutillier was a fighter pilot. He himself was nearly killed in the crash of a plane during training. But he recovered: "with hammers they knocked the nose back into position and with thread they sewed my face back on. . . ." He had left Yale in the middle of his Junior year to join the Navy. Commissioned Ensign at Jacksonville in January, 1943, he went overseas the following July with Fighting Squadron One, which was to serve aboard U.S.S. *Yorktown*.

"Carrier activities still fascinate me," he wrote in January, 1944, "I can't seem to feel grim about it all, and this point of view worries me because it actually, as you all know, is a bloody mess. Any one who says he is not scared is a liar and few of the guys I know will not admit it." During his year in the Pacific, he kept a journal, in which as a postscript to the entry for June 23, "our first day of rest since the battle began for these Mariana Islands," he wrote, ". . . the above was only 3 weeks of action. We lost 1/5 of our squadron, fellows I have eaten and drunk and lived with for over a year. Fellows who hurt to see go. Fellows who died nonchalantly and who never would have admitted they were brave. But this is no extraordinary

group. There have been others all these years in all the theatres of war, in all branches, who have done and are doing the same thing, day in and day out. . . .”

The intensity of the combat engaged in by LeBoutillier and his squadron during the early summer of 1944 may be judged in part from his posthumous citations for the Air Medal and two Gold Stars: they credit him with the destruction of an enemy plane over Guam on June 11 and with the probable destruction of another, with an effective bombing and strafing run on a hostile cruiser in the Battle of the Philippine Sea on June 20, “despite terrific enemy resistance and a limited supply of gasoline,” with the destruction of a Japanese fighter plane over the enemy airfield on Iwo Jima July 3, with sinking two Japanese destroyer escorts and setting fire to a cargo ship in the Bonin Islands area July 4.

On July 8, 1944, his squadron commander wrote LeBoutillier's mother: “There is little I can say to help you in your bereavement; the loss (though we hope it may be temporary) of your son, John, I know is a terrible shock to you, for it is a terrible shock to all of us. He has been with us since the beginning (14 months) and I've flown a great deal with him and have talked to him almost daily. I'd gotten to know him well and as a result have had tremendous respect for him, both for his ability and for his strength of character. . . . As for the facts, he went with us to make an attack on a Jap base in the Marianas on the afternoon of July 6. Eight of us made an attack upon the field and pulled out but John did not appear nor had his division leader, Richard Eastmond, seen him since the commencement of the dive. We scanned the field and the surrounding area but there was no evidence of his having been shot down. . . . We searched both that day and the next but have not found him as yet. . . .” John LeBoutillier's squadron mates continued to search for him, but no trace was ever found.